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A SERMON PREACHT Upon the DEATH OF Mrs *ANNE BARNARDISTON*,

(DAUGHTER of *NATHANAEL BARNARDISTON* Esq; late of *Hackney*:)

Who departed this Life the 30th day of *Decemb.* 1681. at the Age of Seventeen.

With a brief Account of some Remarkable Passages of her LIFE and DEATH.

By John Shower

Published at the Desire of her Relations.

Psal. 103. 15. *As for man his dayes are as grass: as a flower of the field so he flourisheth.*

V. 16. *For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more.*

LONDON,
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TO

The Much Honoured, MADAM *ELIZABETH BARNARDISTON.*

Th R.
S550SE

MADAM,

THE *ſad Occaſion of the* Sermon, *and your* Relation *to* Her, *whoſe dying requeſt was fulfilled in my preaching* it, *doth ſtyle the Dedication yours. Though what I have mention'd of your excellent* Daughter, *is leſs than others would have ſaid on the ſame ſubject, yet having given an account of her preparedneſs and willingneſs to dye, methinks that ſhould be conſidered as a ſufficient Argument to mitigate your Sorrow, and prevent its exceſs. 'Tis the Apoſtles Inſtruction* concerning them who ſleep in Jeſus, *that* we ought not to ſorrow as do others, who have no hope. *Such were the Ægyptians; and 'tis obſerv'd of them, that* they *mourned longer for the death of old* Jacob, *than his own Son* Joſeph *did. I know the* Time of Her Death *gives an Accent to the Calamity: That before your Mourning Weeds were laid aſide for one of* the beſt of Husbands, who hath a good Report of all

1 Theſſ. 13.

Gen. 50.

men, and of the Truth it self; *you should be forced to continue the same, or put on more, for the* Loss *of such a Child, in the* Prime *of her Youth, and Strength, and Beauty*: A Loss *for which you do not mourn alone, since many others are partners of your grief; not by sympathy only as pitying you, but from a due Respect and Affection to her, and their own Concern at her departure.*

But as your Afflictions abound, God can make your Consolations by Christ abound much more: *And such Losses as these, (though some of the smartest and most afflictive to humane Nature) may turn to your* Spiritual Gain: *And even* this Rod, *like that of* Aaron, *may blossom, and produce the* peaceable Fruits of Righteousness: *If in the want of their Company, God himself be more depended on as* your All in all: *If their removal out of this World, promote your Mortification to it: if their being taken up to Heaven, assist your Preparations, and excite your desires to follow: God hath already made good his Covenant Promise, in a very peculiar manner, to those whom he* gave, *and hath* taken *from you; and I trust will do so as to those who remain: that they may* know and serve the God of their Fathers with a perfect heart, and see the Felicity of his Chosen: *That they may tread in the steps of their departed Relatives,*

and

and bear up the Name of God in their respective stations; to his Glory, and your Comfort, and their Salvation. And if God should not make your house to grow, yet he hath made an Everlasting Covenant with you, well ordered in all things, and sure. 2 Sam. 23. 5.

I wish the following Discourse may contribute any thing to your Support: or at least be accepted, as an Expression of my Obedience in complying with your request thus to make it publick: And as a Testimony of my unfeigned Respect to the memory *of the* deceased: *with a serious desire of some benefit to others also, by such a* remarkable Instance *of an* Early Piety, *of an* Exemplary Life, *of a* peaceable Death: *Which* God grant, *who alone can bring Good out of Evil; all whose Works are perfect, and whose Wayes are Judgment. I am*

London, *Jan.* 25. $168\frac{1}{2}$.

MADAM,

Your most Affectionate

Humble Servant,

John Shower.

TO THE

READER.

Reader,

I *Being Earneſtly deſired, both by the* Relations *of the Deceaſed Gentlewoman, and by the* Preacher *of the following Funeral Sermon, to Teſtifie what I knew of the Gracious and wonderful workings of the holy Spirit upon the Heart of this Perſon during Her Life; I could not but yield to their Importunate requeſts.*

And upon this occaſion I muſt declare; That having Known her from her Childhood; *and having very much obſerved her* Converſation *of late, and being called to give her ſeveral viſits in her* ſickneſs, *I do believe (upon the whole) that God did give her a* found Repentance *for, and a* Full Remiſſion *of all her ſins, through the mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.*

I can aſſure thee, Reader, *who ever thou art: that ſhe had an awakened* ſight of her ſins, *accompanied with a great meaſure of* Godly Sorrow *for them; I diſcerned alſo in her a* deep Humiliation, *and I heard her open* ſelf-Condemnation *thereupon. I found in her alſo a clear Knowledge of the Nature of the New* Covenant; *together with a Right Apprehenſion of the Nature of that* Faith, *which is Required of all men (and is through Grace beſtowed upon ſome penitents) whereby the Soul doth attain to an Intereſt in that Covenant: It being,*

ing, thereby, united unto Christ; and consequently, *doth partake of the Benefits of his* Merits: *and doth receive the Fruits* of his Attonement *with the Inhabitation of his* Spirit.

Saving Faith and True Repentance are alwayes inseparable; and their Conjunction doth evidence and speak *them to be true and saving: both These (I do believe) were united in the Soul of this deceased person. And therefore I have very great Hopes of her State: All* Faith *which is pretended to, where* Repentance *is wanting, I account to be nothing but a presumptuous Confidence; and all seeming Repentance, which is not Accompanied with some Faith in the Divine Goodness, and in the promises made thereof (by our Lord Jesus) is no other than the Repentance* of a Cain, *or a* Judas *his despair.*

Our Lord Jesus did (as it were) Epitomize *the whole Gospel, and* comprehended *the whole Duty of man in two words:* viz. Repent and Believe: *and 'tis to be observed; that these* two *are set in the very Front, as the Text to all his Ministry,* Mark 1. 15. *And by* reason *of the Import of them, they may be accounted as the Contents of the whole.*

Where these two Graces are not conjoyned, Guilt *Remains, and* Sin *Reigns: But where they are united in any Soul, as that* person *is* Justifyed, *so that* Heart *is savingly changed; and that Nature is in measure* Sanctified; *and the life of that man (for the Future) will be proportionably, universally Holy. Would the Genius of the present Age allow me to use Metaphors in Soul-concernments; I should think that I did then best explicate to vulgar capacities the nature of saving* Faith: *as when I did call* Faith *the* Daughter *of Knowledge, the* Sister *of Repentance, and the* Mother *of Love; for the Holy Ghost tells us, that Faith comes in by* Hearing: *Ro.* 10. 17. *That it Purifies the Heart, Acts* 15. 9. *and works by Love, Gal.* 5. 6.

That God had given this person, the True Seed of such a Faith, was evident by it's Fruits: *the Apostle tells us, that* he *that hath* not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, *Ro.* 8. 9. *And also*

be

he tells us, that as many as are led by the Spirit are the Children of God, *Ro.* 8. 16. *Now I must profess that (so far as I was able to* Judge) *I have seldom seen a dying person, manifest more of a Christ-like Spirit than she did; That is, I never saw more of a Spirit* Thirsting *after communion with God, of a Spirit more* contemning *the World, of a Spirit more deeply* bowing *unto the will of God, or a Spirit more* patient *under the Cross; and more* Submitting *to the Rod of God.*

Indeed I knew once a person, that did exceed *her herein; and it was her Renowned Father:* a man of the greatest and most deserved name, *for Piety and Sincerity, for Humility and Patience, of all men, In or Near the City, that I have known: Who Feared no Pain or Torture upon any* other *account, but* this *only,* viz. *Least they should tempt him to the Least* unbecomeing *Groan, in some great paroxisme of the Stone.*

The Submitting *of our* wills *to divine will and* pleasure *in all things, is the* summe *and* substance *of all* practical Religion *here, and the full* conforming *of our* wills *to the divine* will, and mind, *is the* height *and* Top *of all mans* Happiness hereafter: *to enjoy* this priviledge, *of full conformity* to God, *is the Portion of* None *in this World; and to perform that* Duty *of submission to him, is the Attainment of but very* Few; *yet this deceased person was so great a Favourite, as that God was pleased to bestow* this rare Jewel *to be worn in her Bosom, who did seem with* John *to Lye very near the Heart of her Saviour.*

Very signal *and* Conspicuous *is the* discriminating *Grace of God, towards* some *persons more than towards* others; *'tis true, that God is not* wanting *to the Happiness of any of his Creatures: and his absolute* Sovereignty *seems in all things to be governed by his Infinite goodness; so that, he is both Just, and good to all: yet there is nothing more* notable, *or more* evident, *than that there are some objects of his Love, who are his* Segullahs; *his peculiar ones: in whom God doth* especially *delight; and unto whom God doth do good with his* whole Heart, Jer. 32.

As God doth suffer most men to make their own choice, *and doth bestow upon them what they do fully and Finally* choose: *so he will himself choose as he will, and he will do with his* own gratuitous favour *as he himself pleaseth; and he will give no account to* any *of his* own *matters.*

A great Instance hereof was this now *blessed person, of whom I may say, that her* whole Life *was full of Gods* goodness: *and that* Mercy *and* Truth *did follow her even all her* daies; *which* daies, *the favour of Heaven would not suffer to be* many; *because it did ordain, that her* Sorrows *and her* Temptations *should be but* Few.

Time being nothing but a dressing Room *to Eternity; the* shorter *it is, the* sooner *do Holy Souls enter into the more* immediate *presence of the Glorious Majesty.*

It is Reckoned in holy Writ, as an act of very Great kindness *shewn by* Hegai *(the Kings Chamberlain) unto* Esther, *that all things necessary for her* Purification, *and for her due* preparation, *for the love of her* designed *Husband (*The great King Ahashuerus,*) were given to her* more speedily *than to others: whereby a* Quicker *access to the King was afforded her; and the Crown was so much the* sooner *set upon her Head.*

The good Spirit of God did deal something *after the same manner, with this* young Virgin: *For the work of Sanctification was* hastened *in her, that she might the more* early *receive the Crown of Glory, from the* King of Kings: *and might be presented holy and without spot, or blemish, or wrinkle or any such thing.*

Few pages, and fewer hours allotted me for this work, will not permit me to enumerate the many special *favours that were* showred down *upon this person* while she lived.

I shall not therefore take notice of the priviledges of her Birth, *or the Honour of her* Family, *which were* great; *neither will I mention her Natural endowments, of* parts, *or* Beauty, *or any such thing*; *Blessed be God, that she her self (though young) had learned* before her death, *to Reckon such enjoyments as*

these, to be very mean *and poor, when compared with the* Joyes *that were set before her.*

They are Love-tokens of a greater value, *which I did observe to be conferred upon her; and these were* such *and* so many; *That I may say that she was one of those that* God had blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ: *and I may adde with the Apostle, that God* having chosen her in him from before the Foundation of the world, to be holy and without Blame. *And the same God having decreed the* end, *did also ordain the Means.*

Accordingly, in the First place *the kindness of God appeared in* ordering, *that she should be* born *of, and* brought up *by very pious, and Religious Parents; and few persons did ever enjoy more Spiritual* Nurtriture, *and* Admonition, *or had a greater stock of Prayers laid up for them, than this Gentlewoman, and the rest of that Offspring.*

Another singular Mercy, which did promote her Salvation, was the excellent pattern, *of modesty, vertue, and piety which was afforded her by her elder Sisters. The Influence of a* Good example *is alwaies greatly* Advantagious: *but when it is found in near* Relations, *'tis much more obliging and efficacious.*

Another great Blessing, much conducing *to her Eternal Happiness, was this, that in her* youth, *she enjoyed the priviledge of Attending upon* such an eminent Ministry; *that the very* Enemies *thereof, have been heard to* Confess, *that it is very* Learned, *and most* Rational, *and* further *they know not: but such as are* Taught of God, *and have their* spiritual senses exercised, *so as to be acquainted, not only with the* form of Godliness, *but also with* the power thereof, *these men do say, that the Characters which the others do give of this eminent persons teaching, are most true; and they do further also say, that it is* extraordinary Clear *and* convincing, most Evangelical *and* Scriptural; greatly practical *and* profitable, *and yet* very Sublime *and* Spiritual.

Now

Now Reader consider, whether many (if any) such *have finally miscarried; whose* Natures *were* gentle, *and easie to be* entreated; *whose* hearts *were* Soft *and* Tender; *who had the Benefits of such* Education, *and such* Example; *who enjoyed such Teaching* abroad, *as well as such Counsel at* home; *and all, accompanyed with* fervent Prayer *unto God for a* Blessing, *which I am sure that she did not want: it being reported of her Father, that his Custom was (with the Psalmist, Psal. 119. 164.)* Seven times a day to pray unto the Lord, and to praise him. *Moreover, I am informed, that this* deceased Gentlewoman *was observed to spend much time in* Closet-Prayer *of late: consider then, I say, whether we may not* hope confidently, *that the Grace of God had* savingly *and* effectually *wrought upon her; whereby both visibly* in Covenant *with God; and whose heart also God had* disposed *and* prepared, *by such special Means of Grace which he had bestowed upon her.*

And this is yet more evident, *if we* reflect *upon Gods dealing with her in* her last Sickness; *whereby God did seem* to seal Instruction *deeply upon her Soul. Her distemper was one of the worst sort of Small Pox: At her first being taken, she had strong apprehensions that she should dye; she therefore did fall closely upon the work of* Examination, *desiring the assistance of some* Ministers *therein; and she was visited by many: she opened her case to us all, and God was pleased to make her to suspect and be jealous of the worst; and to confess, and condemn her self for, her Sins, both of Omission, as well as Commission; and humbly to inquire after the* only way *of Pardon: And it pleased God so to bless these last helps, as that* none *of us, who visited her, do doubt; but the same Spirit who* convinced her of Sin and of Righteousness, *did at length* seal her up to the day of Redemption.

The Alpha, *the first* Beginning *and* Foundation *of all* practical *Religion, is* that act *whereby a Soul doth* deliberately, resolvedly, freely, *and* expressely dedicate *and* devote *it self unto* God, *and his* Service: *This the Saints in* 2 Cor. 8. 5. *The* Omega, *the* last, concluding, *and* consummating *work of a devout Soul, is to* commit *and* commend its Spirit into the hands of God, as to a faithful Creator: *thus did* Stephen, Acts 17. 59. *Yea thus did our Lord Jesus himself*, Luk. 23. 46.

Thus also did this blessed Person: she did, I hope, begin *well, in an early* Consecration *of her self to God; I am sure she did* end *well: and 'tis the* end that Crowns the work: *she did reckon, that she had not fully* Finished her course; *nor rightly laid the* Top-stone *of her* spiritual Building, *so as to cry* Grace, Grace unto it; *untill she had most devoutly and* humbly *offered up her* Soul *to God in* Prayer, *by the assistance of some Friend and Minister.*

Accordingly, although it were midnight, *and although my Habita-*

did send for me: and with the clearest use of her Reason, *and the most fervent desires of her* Soul; *she did intreat me, that I would in her Name,* solemnly *and* expresly surrender *and* Give up *her Soul into the* Arms *and* Bosom *of her Saviour, in whose precious Blood, she did* hope, *that all her sins were* now *fully washed away.*

I did readily *obey the Call, and did comply with her desire: for I* did, *and* do *judge, that this desire of hers proceeded from some* extraordinary Impulse, *and* work of the Holy Ghost: *And Reader, thou wilt think, as I doe, if thou shalt* read *and* observe *the* effect *and* consequence *hereof; as it is related to thee, in the* close *of the following discourse.*

Almost such another extraordinary Impress (*as it may be thought*) *was made upon her Spirit, on occasion of this* Author's *presenting her with a* Funeral Sermon, *which he had preached but a little while before she was taken* sick: *which Sermon she having* received, *and* read, *and* diligently considered; *she was heard to say, That she did think, that* her own change *would not be* far off; *and that she could* wish, *that the Author might preach* her *Funeral Sermon also: and she then named the Text (now insisted upon;) and said, That she* hoped, *that God would make* her Funeral Sermon *as profitable* to other *young ones, as the Former Sermon had been to* her self.

Her Prognosticks were too true, *as to the* shortness *of the time which she lived* after *those words* were spoken *by her; God grant, that her* hopes *be not* frustrated; *but that all her* dying words *may prove truly* Prophetical; *and especially those, which related to the profitable* success *of the Sermon here before thee.*

The Author hath done his part like himself, *as well in* this, *as in the* former Discourse; *Oh that he might find as* diligent, *and as* considering Readers *as she was; many excellent Considerations, very* subservient, *and* conducing *to thy Conviction and Salvation, are proposed herein: but all will be in* vain, *and to no* purpose, *without thine* own Meditation, *and the* Spirits application: *Concerning the Discourse, I must say* no more, *and I can do* no less; *than to allude to the words of the holy Ghost,* Eccl. 12. 9. And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, therefore, *in this Discourse,* he hath Taught the people Knowledge; and hath given good heed, and sought and set in order many *Arguments for thy preparing for* Death, *and moreover for* preferring *of* Death *before* Life: *The Lord convince thee by them; and also carry thee* comfortably *through all* Time *to* Eternity. *My Paper is short, and my Time shorter, I must therefore conclude; for the Sermon is wholly Printed, and stops only untill I have told thee that I am*

Thy Friend and Soule Servant.

A Funeral Sermon:

Phil. I. 23.

For I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better.

SAint *Paul* writing from *Rome* to the Church at *Philippi*, in this Chapter acquaints them with his Bonds and other Diſcouragements; which he tells them by their Prayers and the Aſſiſtance of the Spirit of Chriſt obtained thereby, would turn to his Salvation and the furtherance of the Goſpel, and had already been attended with ſome conſiderable ſucceſs in that kind; to fortifie and confirm the Profeſſors of the *Chriſtian Faith*, and to propagate and promote *it* even in the Court of *Cæſar*, and in other places; and if Chriſt might be magnified, he was perfectly indifferent to Live or Dye: *For to me to live is Chriſt, and to dye is gain,* v. 12. 13. 14. 19. 20. v. 21.

v. 21. His Life he hop'd might advance the Honour of Christ; and his Death would be subservient to the same design: by his further service if he live, and by his sufferings if he dye; by his Ministry supposing his Life, and by his Martyrdom in case of his death.

V. 22. *But if I live in the flesh, this,* saith he, *is the fruit of my labour*; or, it is worth my Labour to glorifie the Redeemer by continuing in this World. *Yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.*

To *Depart* or be dissolv'd, the Original word is
Luk. 12. 36 used both by Christian and Heathen Writers for a departure from any place to return home. And when the same Apostle speaks of his approaching death, he
2 Tim. 4. 6. tells us, that *the Time of his departure was at hand.*

Having a desire to depart, a vehement and earnest desire, as the word imports; and *to be with Christ,*
2 Cor. 5. 8. to be absent from the Body, and *present with the Lord*; with that merciful *Saviour, who* had compassion on me, when as an ignorant Blasphemer I persecuted his Members; *who* call'd me to be an Apostle, and enabl'd me by his Grace to own his Truth in the face of Dangers, and hath hitherto comforted me in all my Tribulation. I desire to depart, that I may be with *him. With him,* not with the *blessed Angels* or *departed Saints,* though their Society will make a part of the heavenly Joy: Not the *former,* they are but ministring Spirits and menial Servants imployed under him; and though they shine as Stars, yet *he* is the enlivening Sun, from whom they derive their Lustre and borrow all their glory. Not the *latter*; they have no Blessedness but by his Donation

nation and Purchaſe, no Crowns of Life but what *he* puts on. Therefore 'tis not to be with them only or chiefly, that made him thus groan to be diſſolv'd, thus earneſtly deſire to depart, but *to be with Chriſt: Which is far better*, ſimply and in it ſelf more deſirable, *by much more better*, the Comparative being double in the Greek Text; and yet I wot not what to chooſe, for *I am in a ſtrait betwixt two. On the one hand*, his Love to the *Philippians* who needed his preſence, (many falſe Teachers being at that time crept in among them,) made him willing to abide in the fleſh, and deferr his own felicity for a time upon their account: But the Glory of Chriſt's preſence *on the other*, and his own unſpeakable advantage by it, made him deſirous of a Departure; and therefore, though he determines for the *former*, and was content to Live, and 'tis probable had ſome ſecret intimation from Heaven, that all his work in this World was not yet finiſht; yet he grants the *latter* to be ſimply more eligible: *having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far Better.* Which words are not more ſuitable to a *Funeral Solemnity*, than expreſſive of the *dying Thoughts and Temper of our deceaſed Friend*, and were choſen by her as the Subject of my preſent Diſcourſe. And that I may comprehend the Subſtance and Deſign of the Text, according to the deſire of the Dead, for the Benefit and Inſtruction of the Living; let us conſider, v. 24.

1. When and how far it is warrantable for a Chriſtian to deſire death?

2. In what reſpects to depart and to be with Chriſt is far Better than to abide in the Fleſh.

3. On what Grounds and Principles a Chriſtian may expect a future Bleſſedneſs with Chriſt after

his departure, so as to encourage and excite his desires after it?

4. Whence it comes to pass, that even those who acknowledge it Far Better to be with Christ, than to continue in the body, are yet unwilling to depart in order to it? and what Remedies are proper to the case of such?

5. The Application of the whole, particularly with respect to the sad Occasion of our present Meeting.

1. When and how far is it warrantable for a Christian to desire to be dissolv'd? This Inquiry may be answered in the following Propositions.

1. Our *dissolution* and departure as a *natural* or *penal evil*, as contrary to Nature, or as the Punishment of Sin, cannot possibly be the Object of a rational desire: If God hath promised a long Life as the Encouragement and Reward of our Obedience, and threatned an hasty death as the punishment of Impiety: If it be universally true, that the Soul of man desires Union with the Body, and unavoidably dreads a separation from it: If Torturing pains and loathsom Diseases are the usual Antecedents of dying: If the Corruption of the Body, and its Imprisonment in the Grave till the general Resurrection be the certain Consequent of our dissolution: We cannot but think of Death as a *natural Evil*; and *as such* decline and fear it.

Much less desirable will it appear, if considered as the *Wages of Sin*, and the Fruit of Gods displeasure, and the Just Sentence of his Vindictive Justice: but how far our dissolution in this latter Notion of

it

it is changed by the death of Christ in reference to Believers, is another question, and will more properly be considered under the third Inquiry.

2. Our dissolution and departure ought not to be desired, *Only* as a freedom from Temporal Evil; as preventive of present suffering, or delivering us from it. The Apostle doth not mention the uneasie Circumstances of a Prison, or the continual hardships to which he was exposed from the malice of his adversaries, as the ground of his desire to depart, but *to be with Christ*: he knew very well that a Christian may serve the ends of God's glory, and be useful to others in a state of suffering: and therefore when he saith in another place, *We that are in this Tabernacle do groan being burden'd,* 2 Cor. 5. 4. he adds the limitation in the following words, *not to be unclothed but cloth'd upon, that mortality may be swallowed up of Life:* not meerly to avoid the inconveniencies of our abode in so poor a dwelling, but to come to the possession of the *building not made with hands eternal in the Heavens.* Not meerly to find relief and deliverance from our present burdens, when through melancholy or discontent we are weary of Life: when we have set our Hearts on somewhat we cannot obtain, or struggle with some difficulties we cannot master: or are impatient under bodily pains, or quite dispirited by the sad prospect of approaching Calamities; in such a case to wish for Death, and *desire to depart*, is unbecoming the Character, the incouragement and hopes of a Souldier of Christ: much less will the Gallantry of a *Roman* or a *Philosopher* legitimate the desire of Death, only to prevent Slavery, or avoid Disgrace, or miss the sight of an unwel- Job 7. 1. Jon. 4. 3.

come

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come object. As *Cato* resolv'd to dye that he might not behold *Victorious Cæsar*, whom by all means possible he had endeavoured to ruine: and *Cicero* saith expresly of him, that the reason of his choice was just, and that *Cato* ought to dye rather then see the face of a Tyrant. But we have not so learn'd Christ, for

icero in uscul. est. lib. 1.

3. We must not designedly precipitate or hasten our own departure; nor wilfully neglect any probable means to preserve our Lives, how desirous so ever we are to be with Christ: we acknowldge *God* as the *Author* and *Owner* of our lives, and shall we presume to dispose of what is *his*, without a declaration of his consent and order to authorize us? Are we bound by the sixth commandment to preserve the Life of our neighbour, and may we be negligent and careless of our own? is not every man nearer to himself than any other can be? and is not self-murder a violation of the Law of nature and condemned by a general suffrage? and can we suppose it a sufficient Justification of our selves, that we profess a desire to *be with Christ?* whereas we may not do this or any other evil, though the greatest good may come of it: *he that hasteth to be rich*, even in this sence, *shall not be innocent*. We must be intirely devoted to serve and glorifie the Redeemer as long as we live; and rather dye upon the Spot, than quit our Station without the order of our General: and yet we must not shipwrack our health, or expose our Lives to hazard, without a Warrant from Heaven.

rov. 28. 6.

4. A *Sincere* desire to be with Christ is consistent with *some fear* of Death, and a reproveable *unwillingness* to depart and be *dissolv'd*. The example

ple of Christ himself is usually urg'd in vindication of a natural sensitive fear of Death, *viz.* the discovery thereof which he made by his Agony and prayer in the Garden. But a *Socinian* only will assert, that therefore he was more affected with the fear of Death than many of the Martyrs have been, because of the exquisite Temper and tender constitution of his body; and that there was nothing but what was natural and ordinary in his case: whereas he was to conflict with the wrath of God, and bear the curse, and be wounded for our Transgressions, *&c*, otherwise his own innocency and perfect resignation to the will of his Father, and the prospect and assurance of victory and reward, would certainly have prevented his Terrible agony and bloody sweat and importunate cries, *that if possible the Cup might pass from him.* However I doubt not, but a Timerous Temper may render some persons extreamly apprehensive of the pains of death, and on that account unwilling to depart, though they are truly *desirous* to be with Christ.

Others through the weakness of Faith or overmuch concern in the affairs of this Life, *&c.* though they grant it unspeakably better to be present with the Lord, and have chosen it as their portion and final Happiness; may yet be loth to passe through the dark valley: they cannot joyn with the Apostle in desiring to be *dissolv'd*, though they can speak it from their very hearts, that they desire to *be with Christ*; and that desire is so far prevailing as to keep them upright, and yet not efficacious, so as to conquer the fears of interposing death. How unwelcome was the message of Death

to

to an *upright Hezekiah*, even then when he could plead his Integrity before the Lord? *he turn'd his face to the wall, and wept*, and beſought the Lord that he might not dye, as is evident by *Iſa.* 38. 3, 5, *v.* compar'd: but I dare not ſay, his unwillingneſs to dye at that Time was a ſinful weakneſs, becauſe he might well be concern'd for the Kingdom after his deceaſe, leaſt the faithful ſhould be ſtaggered, and the people revolt to Idolatry, there being no viſible *Succeſſor* to advance the Reformation ſo hopefully begun; for *Manaſſes* was not then born, being but twelve years old when he began to reign, and we know that *Hezekiah* had fifteen years added to his Life. 2 *King.* 20. 6.

5. Though we deſire to be with Chriſt, we muſt not be peremptory as to any *determinate Time*; but refer our ſelves to God's good pleaſure for the ſeaſon of our departure: though with *Job* we
Job 14.15 ſhould be *ready to anſwer, when God doth call*, yet with humility and reſignation we muſt expect his ſummons, and *wait till our change come*: though the *daies of our appointed Time* ſhould be longer than ordinary. Though in a dutifull obſervance to our Heavenly Father we ſhould be willing to return home as ſoon as he ſhall pleaſe to call us, and the felicity of his preſence ſhould render it deſirable; yet his Soveraign will and unerring wiſdom muſt be practically acknowledg'd in reference to the Seaſon: he alone, of whom and to whom are all things, is fit to determine how long we ſhall tarry, or how ſoon we ſhall depart: even the Light of nature may teach us this: And therefore, when ever
Seneca Epiſt. 24. 91. we pray *Thy Kingdom come*, we muſt not limit the holy one of *Iſrael* by preſcribing the *Time*; but imme-

immediately ſubjoyn, with reſpect to *that*, *Thy will be done.*

6. Not the Time only, but the *Kind and Manner*, of our diſſolution muſt be referr'd to God. Some have wiſht for a ſudden death, and others have pray'd againſt it. Some have deſired to dye by one diſeaſe, and others by another.

Some holy perſons of a timerous Temper and a tender Body, would chooſe to depart by a *Conſumption*; not only as allowing them a longer Time to prepare for death, but as an eaſier kind of Death than ſeveral others: Whereas, beſides the uncertainty and deceitfulneſs of that diſeaſe, 'tis more than poſſible, that the Languiſhment of a pining ſickneſs may be as irkſome and inſupportable, as the ſhorter pains of more violent diſtempers. But God is the only Judge (to whom we muſt Submit, as the wiſe diſpoſer of all events) not only of the Time but the Manner of our departure: not only how *long* we ſhall ſojourn in this earthly Tabernacle, but *what* ſhall diſſolve and pull it down.

7. Our *deſire* to depart and to be with Chriſt, muſt not be *raſh and haſty*; but the reſult of many Serious and deliberate thoughts, comparing both States together, and underſtanding the difference. The Apoſtle knew his duty in compliance with the Will of God, and therefore for the ſervice of his Maſter, and the advantage of the *Philippians*, was willing to Live: but he knew withall, it was far better in it ſelf to depart that he might be with Chriſt, and as ſuch he deſired it. And a due *compariſon* between our preſent and our future Life, our inconveniencies and ſufferings in this world, and

our Felicity in the next, is proper to regulate and quicken our desire to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. Therefore,

2. *In what respects is it far better to be with Christ, than to abide in the flesh?* what is the vast difference between *What we are*, and *What we shall be*? that the expectation of the *Latter* should even make Death and dissolution desirable in order to it. And here it will be necessary to consider,

1. The Expression of our Felicity after death here used by the Apostle, *Being with Christ.*

2. In *what respects 'tis far better* to depart, and be absent from the body, that we may be present with him.

1. The Expression of our *future blessedness*, by *being with Christ.* Till we are present with the Lord, and see him face to face, and know as we are known, we must content our selves with such sensible representations of *it*, as God is pleas'd to reveal in his Word; such as our ignorant earthly minds can bear, and may be most affected with. But when once the vail of darkness is remov'd by death, we shall see him as he is, and all our Faculties be purified and inlarg'd, and suited to the blessed company and work above. We shall see *him whom our Souls love*, and reap a Happiness by doing so, bigger than our present Hopes, and far above our highest Thoughts about it: For *in his presence is fulness of Joy, and at his right hand are Everlasting pleasures.* And can we imagine, that a blessedness, purchas'd by infinite Merit, contriv'd by infinite Wisdom, and prepar'd by infinite Power, and

and beſtow'd at length through infinite Grace, will in any thing be defective? Doth not our Apoſtle deſcribe it beſt, by aſſuring us it cannot be deſcrib'd; that 'tis greater than we ever ſaw, beyond what we ever heard, and far above what we can ever think? Doth not the very hopes of ſeeing him, revive our drooping hearts? Oh what will be the Glory of that bleſſed ſight! is not the pledge and aſſurance of it by the Harbinger of his holy Spirit exceeding comfortable? Oh what tranſcendent Satisfaction will his preſence give us! We now comfort our ſelves with the Contemplation, and one another with the Diſcourſe of it: and if our dark Faith and our faint Hopes, can give us ſuch a Joyful proſpect of what ſhall be conſequent to our diſſolution; into what raviſhing Joy ſhall we enter by the open Viſion and full enjoyment? Is the encouragement and ſupport of a Chriſtian now, from *his preſence with us* here; and will it not be far better to be *preſent with him* above, *to be for ever with the Lord?* When we ſhall never queſtion his Love to us, or doubt of ours to him, but have a full aſſurance of the one, and a glorious exerciſe of the other?

And becauſe our knowledge will be ſtill increaſing, our flames of Love ſhall ſtill riſe higher. But what additional Bliſs the Soul ſhall have by the Reſurrection of the body, and the great Tranſactions of the Judgment Day, we know but in part. Bleſſed God, we know *ſo much* in this imperfect ſtate, *enough* to excite our deſires, and quicken our preparations, and encourage our Perſeverance. And let's bleſs him more, that he hath prepared *ſuch a glory* for us in the preſence of the Redeemer,

as we cannot fully understand, till death convey us to him.

But *to be with Christ*, is not only eligible in it self, as expressive of our future Glory; but much rather to be desired, if considered *comparatively*: Therefore,

2. *In what respects* is it preferrable to an abode in the flesh, so as to make us rather choose to *depart*, that we may be with him; than Continue in the Body, and be absent from the Lord?

1. Is not a state of *Rest* and *Joy* much more desirable, than to be continually harrass'd with *Trouble* and *Sorrow*? We ordinarily begin this World in Tears, and solemnize our own Nativity as we do the Funerals of our dearest Friends: as if we were *then* sensible of that universal Curse which hath afflicted Mankind since the first Transgression; and had a clear prospect of the miseries we are born to, and must afterward suffer: And in all the Portions of our little time, what and how many do we every where encounter! How many things are there which we find are wanting both as to our Accomplishments and Enjoyments? and how much are we disappointed, if we look for satisfaction from
1 Joh. 2. 16 *the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life? which*, saith the Apostle, *is all that is in the world*: Earthly Pleasures, Wealth and Honour.

Do we not find, that what doth rejoyce and please us one day, appears with another Face when we view it next? or if we think it would please us still, 'tis gone e're we are aware, and with all our skill and power we cannot protract its duration. Do not evil accidents overtake us on a sudden, and our most

most probable designs miscarry in the birth? as if all things were governed by Chance, and there were no Intelligent Director to oversee and regulate the Affairs of the World, and the Actions and Conditions of men: Insomuch, *that the Race is not to the swift, nor the Battell to the strong, nor Bread to the wise, nor Riches to men of understanding, nor Favour to men of skill, but Time and Chance happens to them all.* Our Pleasures flatter and deceive us, and our Afflictions trouble and disquiet us: We are imposed upon by our Senses, and misguided by our Passions: Cross'd in our Desires, and frustrated in our Hopes: griev'd by present evils, or perplext with the fears of future: and our Spirits for the most part discompos'd either by personal or relative Calamities. Some rueful Spectacle is ever now and then presented before our Eyes; some evil tidings or unpleasant sound doth grate our Ears. We bewail the wants of the Poor, which we cannot supply; or envy the prosperity of the Wicked, which we cannot hinder; or grieve at the Afflictions of the Righteous, which we cannot remedy. Eccles.

We have some suffering Friend with whom to sympathize, some distressed or deceased Relation to lament: some unhappiness of our own, or of those we love, to be concern'd for. Besides the Treachery and unfaithfulness of our seeming Friends; the Hatred and Malice of our open Enemies; the scandalous Actions of professing Christians; their Divisions and Animosities among themselves, and their despiteful usage and entertainment from the World; the Complaints of the Miserable, the Groans of the Sick, the Cries of the Oppressed, and our own bodily Infirmities, weaknesses and pains, *&c.* enough

one

one would think to make us desire to depart, and render us extreamly willing to lay down and dye, (if God think fit,) that we may be at rest; especially having the expectation of being *for ever with the Lord.* For otherwise even * Heathens have spoken excellently of the Advantages of Death, as the period of our present Sorrows.

* M. Anton. l. 3. 4. Arr. Epict. l. 4. c. 6. Goth Conf. Philos. l.

2. Is not a state of *holiness* and *perfect purity*, far better than a Life of *Temptation*, *Corruption* and *Sin*? How are we now buffeted by *Satan*? by his Sinful suggestions, his subtil devices and snares, and his fiery darts? and by that means our Integrity assaulted, our peace of Conscience unsettled, and our Perseverance indangered?

Our Conflict with him is so difficult, and the issue of the battel as to what depends on us, so very uncertain; that we are often ready to throw down our Arms, and give up all as Lost. For though he be a conquer'd and baffled Adversary, through the victory which our Captain hath obtain'd against him; yet we cannot now Triumph over him, as hereafter we shall. And is it not far better to abandon *this world*, *of which he is the God*, and get above that *Air of which he is the Prince*, that we may be with Christ?

2 Cor. 4. 4. Eph. 2.

Moreover, how doth our depraved Nature continually cast forth mire and dirt? what remaining filthiness is there yet to be purg'd? what powerful Lusts to be mortified and subdued? which indispose us for Spiritual duties, and derive a damp and deadness upon all our Religious Exercises; which cool our Zeal, and abate the fervor of our Spirits in the service of our Redeemer; which weaken our Confi-

Confidence in Prayer, and ſhame our faces before the Lord in ſecret. And is it not far better to part with the body of fleſh, that thereby we may be rid of *this body of ſin and death*, and be like our Saviour in perfect purity? Rom. 7.

Do we not complain of our Ignorance of Divine Truths, and the bleſſed Myſteries of the Goſpel, notwithſtanding all our means of knowledge? of our Earthlineſs and unbelief? of unbecoming Thoughts of God and holy things? of proud Imaginations and carnal reaſonings againſt his Works and Word? of languiſhing and imperfect Graces to be recovered and perfected, *&c*? And is it not better be with Chriſt, where that which is imperfect ſhall be done away?

Is not God diſhonor'd and provok't, by our frequent Omiſſions and ſlight Performances of duty? do we not reſiſt and quench and ſadden his holy Spirit? and are we not often griev'd by God's rebukes and frowns? by the wounds and ſmart regrets of our own Conſcience? ſo that we *remember God and are troubled*, and cry out in the bitterneſs of our Souls, *Hath he forgotten to be gracious, and will he be merciful no more?* Are not our holy Purpoſes inconſtant, and our beſt Reſolutions wavering and unſteddy, and very quickly, very eaſily ſhatter'd by the breath of a ſmall Temptation?

Have we not a conſtant Watch to keep over our Hearts and wayes? a perpetual War to manage with the Infernal Trinity, the World, the Fleſh, and the Devil? and do we know his rage, and malice, and ſerpentine policy, with the Multitude, Strength and Power of his Temptations? How often we have been

been foil'd already, and how ſoon we may be ſo again? and ſhall we not be deſirous of a ſinleſs ſtate in the preſence of Chriſt; where no Tempter, no Temptation ſhall ever be admitted?

Yea, had we no corruption or Sin of our own to be delivered from, yet our concern at God's diſhonour by the ſins of others, ſhould make us willing to depart; as much more deſirable than our abode
b 24. 9. on *earth:* Which *is given into the hands of the wicked,*
24. 4. *and defiled by its Inhabitants*: Where the very Air is infected with Oaths and Blaſphemies, prophane diſcourſe and filthy Talk: Where the very Being of a God is queſtion'd, his Providence denyed, and his Authority mock't: Where the Goſpel of Chriſt is diſparag'd and deſpiſed, his Laws contradicted, his Worſhip polluted, his Inſtitutions ſubverted, and his holy Name made a cloak for Licentiouſneſs, and his faithful Servants trampl'd on by the foot of Pride, and ſcorned by men at eaſe, and forc't to own his Truth with the peril of their Lives. And can we ſay, It is good to be here? or is it not far better to forſake ſuch a Place and Company, that we may be with Chriſt?

3. Let us conſider what are *the grounds and Principles by which a Chriſtian is aſſured of this Bleſſedneſs in the preſence of Chriſt after his diſſolution.* This Inquiry is neceſſary, becauſe the diſcourſe of our future Bliſs with Chriſt cannot be ſuppoſed to have any effect or influence upon us, to make us deſire our departure, while we disbelieve or make a doubt of the matter.

I hope it were needleſs to prove the Poſſibility of the Souls exiſtence in a ſtate of ſeperation from the Body. *Whe-*

Whether in the body or out of the body, would not have been a doubt to this great Apostle, if he could not possibly have liv'd but *in it*: neither could he desire to depart that he might *be with Christ*, if after his departure he should *not be at all*. And supposing the existence of the Soul notwithstanding the dissolution of the Body, we have as full an assurance as the nature of the thing is capable of, that holy Souls shall be present with the Lord in glory, when absent from the body: 1 *Thess.* 4. 17. *Joh.* 17. 24. *Matth.* 25. 23. *Rev.* 3. 21, *&c.* 2 Cor. 5. 2.

But because the Text hath a special relation to Christ and to be with him, is the Blessedness on the account whereof 'tis desirable to depart; I shall only mention *his Death* and *Resurrection*, as a sufficient ground to confirm our Faith in the certainty of being with him, and to excite our Desires of a departure in order to it.

1. *The Death of Christ.* He hath cancell'd the Hand-writing against us, and put away Sin, which is the sting of Death, by the Death of the Cross: a *way is now open for us into the holy of holies by his blood*, not for our Prayers only but our Persons. He hath wounded the Head of the old Serpent, even by permitting him to bruise his Heel, by crucifying his humane Nature, (which was only *Vestigium Deitatis.*) As *Benaiah* slew the *Egyptian* with his own Spear. Having *destroyed death and him that had the power of it, and delivered those who were all their Life time subject to bondage, through the fear of death.* Eph. 1. 7. Heb. 10. 19. 2 Sam. 23. 21. Heb. 2. 14, 15.

He hath set his foot on the neck of this Adversary, disarm'd it of it's weapon, and rob'd it of it's

sting, and aboliſht the uglineſs and poyſon of it. He hath diſmounted *Hell and Damnation from behind*
Rev. 6. 8. *him who Sat on the Pale-horſe.* Whether the *firſt Adam* were buryed in *Calvary*, where the *ſecond* was crucifyed, as ſome affirm, I need not enquire; we know that his Death was our Victory, and his Croſs may be our Triumph, ſince the Devil is conquered, and death Sanctified, and the Grave perfum'd by his burial, ſo that we need not be afraid to lodge in a Sepulchre where our Lord himſelf hath ſlept.

Yea ſince the effuſion of his Blood, there is an amiable ruddineſs in the Face of death; for that which was the Inſtrument of Juſtice, is now the meſſenger of Peace and Joy, that which was the gate of Hell, is the way to Life. He hath brought *ſweetneſs out of the Strong*, and *meat out of the Eat-*
1 Cor. 3. 21. *er*; and therefore Death as well as Life is reckon'd in the Inventory of the riches of the Saints. *All things are yours*, becauſe *you are Chriſts, and Chriſt is Gods.*

2. *His Reſurrection* and Exaltation; his riſing from the Dead not only diſcovers the poſſibility of our Reſurrection, and gives us a *pledge and aſſu-*
Rom. 8. 11. *rance* of it, as declaring the ſufficiency and accep-
1 Cor. 15. 20. tation of his Sacrifice; that therefore the Dead in Chriſt ſhall live, and with his Dead Body ariſe: But being punctually effected according to his prediction and promiſe, it confirms the Truth of all his Word, and ſeals the promiſe of eternal Life unto all Believers. He hath open'd the Priſon doors,
1 Cor. 15. 20. and loos'd the bands of Death, and roll'd away the heavy Stone from the Graves of his people; he is now become the *firſt fruits of them that Sleep*

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in Jesus: And *hath the Keyes of Death and Hell*; Rev. 1.
even the two most formidable enemies are under *his* Dominion: *who though once he were dead, doth now live, yea live for evermore.* And for this very end did God raise him up, that *our faith and hope might be in him,* in reference to the Blessedness of another Life. 1 Pet. 1.

Yea, saith the Apostle, concerning that, *he raised him from the dead, no more to see corruption. God said, I will give you the sure mercies of David*; or an Everlasting Covenant, which Death shall not dissolve: and his being risen is the ground of our Faith and Hope that the promise shall be fulfill'd. For the Resurrection of Christ is the evidence of the validity and Efficacy of his Death and Sacrifice, and a sufficient proof, that his Precious Blood shed upon the Cross, was the *blood of an Everlasting Covenant.* Establishing a Covenant of Grace, and making it truly Everlasting; for we know that *he is a Priest for ever, after the Power of an endless Life.* And therefore *know,* to our unspeakable Satisfaction, Incouragement and Joy, *in whom we have believed, and that he is able to keep unto that day, what we have committed to him; to perfect what he hath begun; and at last present us blameless before the presence of his glory with exceeding Joy. For our Life being hid with him in God,* we are fully assured, *that when he who is our Life shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory; and because he lives, we shall live also; and when* he shall appear, we shall be *like him, for we shall see him as he is.* Act. 13. Isa. 55. Heb. 13. Heb. 7. 2 Tim. 12. Phil. 1. Jude 21. Col. 3. 1 Joh. 3.

4. Let us consider, *Whence it comes to pass, that notwithstanding the Blessedness of being with Christ, and our*

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our assurance of it by his Death and Resurrection, that yet we are so backward and unwilling to depart? What is the true reason why so many of those who acknowledge it far better to be with Christ, yet cannot say with the Apostle, That *they desire to be dissolv'd, that they may be with him?*

1. *The weakness of Faith concerning the Invisible World, and the future Glory of the Saints*, is the reason why so many Christians are unwilling to dye. They are very sensible of the inconveniencies of their present abode; they complain to God and men of Corruption, Temptation and Sin, and they hear of a blessed Deliverance from all these by Death, and a perfect Felicity in the presence of the Redeemer after their dissolution; but *unbelief makes them stagger at the Promise*: They are not fully satisfied that such a transcendent Glory will be Consequent to Dying. Did they but soundly believe the Testimony and Revelation which God hath given in his Word concerning it, they would choose to be *absent from the body*. Some of the Ignorant Heathens have been desperate in their Choice of death, only as the Period of present Calamities: but others who were doubtful of the Consequence, have yet entertained it with an hearty Welcome: As *Socrates* for instance, who profess'd, That *he ought not to fear death because he could not tell whether it were good or evil*: And shall not we who understand the Grounds and Principles, the greatness and certainty of a future Blessedness after Death, be as willing to depart? *A confirmed Faith* is therefore necessary and adviseable in the present case: and the rather, that thereby we may *quench the fiery darts of Satan*; who if he cannot

hinder us of our Crown, would rob us of our Joyful Prospect of it: if he cannot prevent our future Glory, would render us dejected in our passage thither: if he cannot prevail to exclude and banish us for ever from the Presence of Christ, would darken our present comfort by the desire and Hope of it: but more especially at the prospect and *approach of Death*, for *that is his hour, and the power of darkness.*

But by *this shield of Faith*, we may be able to stand even in *that evil day* of our dissolution. Eph. 6. 11. 16.

2. *The Pains of Death.* They pray that God would hasten his Glorious Kingdom, and bring them to it; and believe it to be most eligible to be with Christ; yet are loth their own Prayers should be answered, and the end and object of their Faith obtain'd, through the discouraging apprehensions they admit of a dying hour.

Would we not be with the Lord, and know him better, and Love him more, and enjoy him fully? and shall we stick at *a little pain*, as introductory to so great a Happiness? A Pain that will speedily convey us to Eternal ease and rest; which thousands of Holy Souls in Glory have indur'd more of, than we can fear.

But suppose the Agonies of Death are ne're so frightful to Flesh and Blood, *hath not Our Redeemer a Rod and Staff to comfort us in the dark Valley?* Pf. 23. 4. Doth he not know what it is to dye, and how much we dread it? doth he not understand our weakness, remember our frailty, pity our infirmities, and bid us ask for support and Strength? yea hath he not promis'd, that *when Heart and Flesh shall* Pf. 73. 2

fail,

fail, that *he will be the Strength of our Hearts, and our Portion for ever?* Shall Ignorant hopeleſs *Heathens*, without God in this world, without the expectation of being with Chriſt in the next, be ſo deſirous of Immortality, as to diſpatch themſelves, and be their own Executioners, to force an eſcape from the Body? and ſhall we reſiſt and ſtruggle, draw back and fear, object and be unwilling, when our Saviour calls us to endleſs and unſpeakable Felicity? Is not this the laſt Experiment of our Faith, and Patience, and holy Reſolution? the laſt eſſay of our Chriſtian Courage? Are not the antecedent pains of dying the fruit of ſin, no leſs than the throws and pangs of Travelling Women? and are the Latter tolerable in hopes of Children and their own deliverance; and may we not ſupport the Former by the aſſiſtance of a greater and better Hope? Are they at all conſiderable and worthy our fear, if put in the ballance with the promiſed Salvation to follow on our departure? Are they comparable in the nature *of evil*, to the bleſſed Life they lead us to in the nature *of good*? or comparable to the gripes of Conſcience which unpardon'd ſinners meet with in Life and Death? yea do we not think them greater, and make them worſe by our fooliſh fears, than moſt do find them? Is not the ſting of Death remov'd, and the Heavenly Manſions prepar'd and promis'd? and is it a reaſonable requeſt, that God ſhould vary from his ſettled courſe and fixed Law, upon our Sole account? will nothing elſe content and pleaſe us, but that Heaven muſt deſcend to Earth, or we be in a moment tranſlated thither; to prevent our pain, and ſuperſede the neceſſity

ceſſity of our diſſolution, which we fear will be ſo attended?

As a proper Remedy in the preſent caſe, let us familiarize the Thoughts of Death by frequent ſerious Meditation. Let us view it oftner in our way, that it may not meet us with ſo much Terror at our Journeys end. Let us admit the Thoughts of a departure with particular application to our ſelves, and improve the Funerals of our Friends as a ſeaſonable *memento* that our own is near. Let us lay open the Picture of Death naked to our view, and urge it to our Hearts, with the Infinite Glory that immediately ſucceeds, and take in the Death and Promiſe of Chriſt, as our aſſurance of it. And this will reconcile us more to a Departure, and help to overcome our unreaſonable fears of pain and ſickneſs antecedent to it.

3. *The weakneſs and declenſion of our Love to Chriſt*, is another ground of our unwillingneſs to depart and to be with him. To a degenerate Soul, that is deſtitute of the Love of Chriſt, an *Everlaſting diſtance* would be more deſirable than a *Local Preſence*. For *that* could not make him happy, he would ſtill be as far remov'd from Bliſs by being with the Lord, as the Center of a Milſtone in the bottom of the Sea would be from moiſture. But the company and converſe of thoſe we Love, muſt needs be eligible: and the more we Love them, the ſtronger ſtill will be our deſire of being with them; and the more impatient ſhall we be of every delay. And is it not the ſence and ſecret language of our Hearts, *Whom have we in Heaven but Chriſt?* And are we not deſirous to forſake this Earth

Earth to enjoy his presence? Certainly the growth, and strength, and exercise of Holy Love to Christ, would even render our dissolution grateful in order to it; and make our Hearts rejoyce at the approach of Death, *as it did old Jacobs, to see the Waggons* that are sent to fetch us to our *beloved Jesus, who is Lord of that Country whither we are going.*

4. *Immoderate Love to this present World, and our Temporal Life.* Were we crucifyed to fleshly Pleasures and sensual Joyes, to worldly Honours and earthly Riches; we should less regret the thoughts of dying, and more heartily desire *to be with Christ.* For as the pangs of Death are not ordinarily so violent and intolerable to one whose strength is wasted by a pining Sickness, as to him who is arrested suddenly in his full strength and vigour; so will he more easily leave this World, who for some time past hath been dying to it. Were we more *crucifyed to the World, and the World to us by the Cross of Christ,* we should not so affectionately hug the Carkass of a dead Enemy, whom we our selves have crucifyed and slain; but wait for the Time, and long for the happy hour when we shall leave it, and be gone to our Eternal Rest. Let us therefore make use of all the Christian methods of Mortification, and look on this world as a strange place, and our selves as *Pilgrims and Strangers* here; as Exiles from our own Country, and hastening to it: And we cannot but with our selves at home, and desire a departure as necessary thereto; and in the Interim sigh to think of the vast disproportion and difference between the slender entertainments of our Inn, and the plentiful Provisions of our Father's house.

Gal. 6. 14.

5. *Blot-*

5. *Blotted Evidences, and the want of Aſſurance,* concerning our Title to the Heavenly Glory. And this we all pretend as the reaſon of our unwillingneſs to dye: A *Sadducee* is loth to dye, leaſt he ſhould not be at all; an unprepared ſinner, for fear of being miſerable; and a doubting Chriſtian, becauſe he knows not whether Happineſs or Miſery ſhall be his portion after his departure. For were we well aſſured we ſhould be with Chriſt for ever, we could not be ſo backward and unwilling to be diſſolv'd. Had we any better grounds to hope, that ſin was pardon'd, and God our Covenant Father; that Heaven would be our Inheritance, and we ſhould not come into Condemnation; we might rejoyce to think of our departure, when and how it ſhall pleaſe God to call us. When the Pſalmiſt could ſay, *The Lord is my Shepherd*; he could boldly venture upon death, and walk through the valley of darkneſs *without fear of evil*: But when diſtreſs had brought his ſin to remembrance, and made him doubt of his condition, he cries, *Oh ſpare me a little longer, that I may recover ſtrength, before I go hence, and be no more ſeen.* Could you ſay with the Spouſe of Chriſt in the *Canticles, My Beloved is mine, and I am his*; you might chearfully joyn your *Amen*, when you hear the Spirit and the Bride ſay in the *Revelations, Come Lord Jeſus, Come quickly.*

Pſ. 23 4, 6

Pſ. 39. 13.

Cant. 6.

Rev. 20.

Therefore Try your State, and examine your ſelves afreſh; and endeavour with your utmoſt care and diligence to obtain a well grounded Aſſurance; founded on the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, by comparing the Promiſes of Remiſſion and Eternal

nal Life with the requiſite qualifications and Conditions of them. For *if our hearts condemn us not,*
Joh. 3.21 *we ſhall have confidence towards God,* even in a dying hour. To which end, let us endeavour by daily acts of Repentance to obtain a daily pardon. Let us ſumme up our accounts at the foot of every page; I mean reflect every Night on the paſſages of the preceding Day: That we may reſt on our Beds with the ſence of a daily pardon; and be as fit to dye, as we are to ſleep.

6. *Our fond affections to our Friends on Earth,* may make us loth to dye, though we hope to be with Chriſt in Heaven. But is not his Boſom more deſirable, than the arms and embraces of our deareſt Friends and neareſt Relations? muſt we not aban-
Luk. 14.26 don and *hate them all for his ſake?* i. e. uſe them as contemptible and hated things, if they keep us from him. Have we not ſolemnly engag'd to do ſo, by our Covenant with God? and ſhall we not ſtand to our agreement? Is there no difference between *our Friends on Earth,* and our *beloved Saviour?* How often is an unactive pity vouchſafed in the room of ſuccour; when *they* need our aſſiſtance, or *we* intercede for theirs! We know if they are *unholy,* they ſhall forever be baniſht from the preſence of Chriſt; and we may well be aſham'd to be unwilling to dye on their account: and if they are *holy,* though we ſhall not return to them, yet we know that they ſhall ſhortly come to us. And cannot God inſtruct them in his fear, order their Conditions, diſpoſe of their affairs, provide for their comfort, and anſwer all our prayers in reference to them, after our departure? yea hath he not often done ſo?

Have

Have we any Friends on Earth, that are every way ſo accompliſht, as alway to delight and pleaſe us? or are we ſo perfectly wiſe and good, as never to diſguſt and diſoblige them? Is there not ſome ſelfiſhneſs, deſign, and private intereſt; ſome hypocryſie, flattery, and diſſimulation; ſome inequality, unſuitableneſs, or inconſtancy in our friendſhips here? Are not the beſt of thoſe we love, Ignorant and miſtaken, erroneous, deceiv'd, weak and impotent: and as likely to defile and grieve us by their Corruption, as to edifie and rejoyce us by their Grace? but hereafter, when that which is imperfect is done away, they ſhall all have ſuitable qualifications to recommend them to our moſt ſincere and conſtant Affection, and be every way more fit for our Content and Joy. We ſhall then be never weary of each others company: we ſhall fully underſtand one anothers mind: we ſhall live in perfect harmony, and full Satisfaction; without the dread of Abſence or fear of Separation. Now if we have ſome Friends, we have many Enemies; but in the preſence of Chriſt there ſhall be none but Friends, and ſuch as ſhall for ever be ſo: their Perſons being more amiable, and their Society more deſirable than now it can be. Now if we are pleaſed with their Converſe, we may quickly loſe it, and the *deſire of our eyes be taken from us* by a ſudden ſtroke; that we know not how to value or uſe them, till 'tis too late. And ſhall we be unwilling, *on their account*, to depart and be with Chriſt? ſince they are haſtning after us, and after a few daies abſence we ſhall meet them again, and dwell with them for ever. Ezek. 24. 16.

5. The *Application* remains, which ſhall be only in four particulars, as *Inferences* from what hath been ſaid.

1. We may hence take notice of *the great Efficacy and Power of the Chriſtian Faith and Hope.* That notwithſtanding our fondneſs and affection to the Body, and the contrariety of death to our ſenſitive Inclinations; that yet this Faith and Hope can urge us to deſire a diſſolution in order to it.

2. We may hence inferr, that *the Soul doth not ſleep in the grave with it's companion the Body untill the Reſurrection*; but immediately paſs into a ſtate of bliſs. For the Apoſtle to abide in the fleſh, was more expedient for the *Philipians*; *for him to* Ver. 21. *Live, would be Chriſt*, i. e. For the advancement of his glory; how then was it *better to depart*? or in what *ſtrait* could he be, whether he ſhould chooſe a longer Life, or a preſent departure; if no Bleſſedneſs were expected till the final Judgment? And why doth he mention his *being with Chriſt*, as that which made death deſirable? Is not the preſence of Chriſt with us on Earth, and our ſerving the ends of his Glory in this world, much more eligible than to Sleep in the grave till *dooms day*?

3. Is it better to depart, and be with Chriſt, than abide in the Body? then the Fable of *Purgatory* is hereby exploded. Were we to be tranſported by our diſſolution, only from Leſſer pains to Greater, or from a Life of Sorrow to a ſtate of Suffering, (ſuch as the *Romaniſts* imagine their Purgatory to be, equivalent to the Torments of Hell in the extremity of them, though different in durati-

duration:) How were it far better to depart, that we may be with Christ?

4. Is it the object of a Christians desire to depart, and be with Christ? and is that far better than to continue in the body? Then *let us not Grieve immoderately at the departure of those, who have obtain'd their wish, and enjoy their desire.*

Did they long to be with Christ, and choose to be dissolv'd in order to it? and is it their unspeakable Satisfaction that they are so? and do we express our Love and Kindness to them, by repining at their Felicity? shall their desired Repose, and Rest, and Happiness; be our Torment, Grief, and Sorrow? would we, that contrary to their own welgrounded Inclinations, they should continue longer here on Earth, or return back again from Heaven, meerly to gratifie our fond Affections? Have they obtain'd a speedy Victory after a short Conflict; and receiv'd the Crown of Life as soon almost as they begun their Christian race; the glorious recompence of Reward, though they had wrought but one hour in the Vineyard, when others must Labour twelve? and shall we mourn like utter Strangers to the Christan Faith and Hope? Would we delay the Glory of God in their Salvation, and deferr their Felicity in the blessed presence of the Redeemer; and be content that a Voice should be wanting in the Heavenly Quire, rather than we be Sadned by their departure?

Would Parents have their Children continue alwayes in their Swadling-cloaths; or when advanc'd to riper years, wish them back again to Infancy, and hinder their possession of that Inheritance, which

which they are born to, and dispos'd to enter on and enjoy?

Are not you your selves hastening to the Grave, and Hope e're long to be with Christ? and is it not a refreshing Thought, to consider, that your *Treasure* is there before you; *with their Father and your Father, with their God and Saviour and yours*; I mean your Holy Children and Friends whom you dearly Love?

The Primitive Church was wont to Solemnize the Funerals of Holy Persons, with singing Psalms and Hymns of Praise to God, for their deliverance and felicity obtain'd by dying: And shall we refuse to be comforted, for the death of those who sleep in Jesus, and desired to do so; *as if in this Life only we had Hope in Christ?*

Something 'tis true, of Grief and Sorrow must be allow'd to Nature, Duty, Custom, and contracted Friendship, and the Honour of the deceas'd: for they are reckon'd to dye miserable, who are hurl'd into the Grave without the attendance of a Sigh, or Tear, or Funeral Lamentation. But our assurance of the future Glory they possess with Christ, (which they themselves preferr'd to a longer abode on Earth) should wipe our Eyes, and prevent excess. We mourn that they are gone, and desire their company; but we know, they do not wish themselves back again for the sake of ours; no, they are gone to better Friends above, than those they have left below. And were it not for the weakness of our Faith and Hope, in reference to the invisible world; were it not for the remaining Power of unmortified Selfishness, and our immoderate

moderate Love of this preſent Life; were it not for the remiſneſs of our Love to Chriſt, and the bleſſed Saints; we could not but deſire to be with *them*, rather than wiſh that they ſhould be longer with *us*.

Therefore inſtead of an intemperate Mourning at their departure, let us imitate their Examples, and propound their holy Lives and Deaths as our Pattern and Encouragement.

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§. 1. *SInce the Honour of* Gods Grace *may be very much advanced by our taking notice of the Influence and power of it in Believers: Since to praiſe and imitate the holy actions of our* departed Friends, *is the only Communion we can now have with them*; *and their* Example, *though they are dead*, may yet ſpeak *to the Inſtruction and comfort of the Living*; *I ſhall conclude with ſome brief Account of that* Excellent Perſon, *whoſe deceaſe gave occaſion to our preſent Meeting.*

§. 2. *And knowing the uſual* Flattery *of Funeral Orations, I ſhall paſs over the Advantages of her* Birth, *the Credit of her* Family, *the Sweetneſs of her* Temper, *(the beſt Soyl for the Fruits of the Spirit;) and the many other natural and acquired* Accomplishments, *which rendred her* Amiable *to all that knew her; and only mention ſome Paſſages, that may either magnifie the Grace of God, or be proper for our imitation and encouragement: And therein ſhall deliver nothing, but either upon my own knowledge, or from the particular Account I have received from her* neareſt Relations,

and

and those Reverend Ministers, *who assisted with their Prayers and Counsel during her Sickness.*

§. 3. *Through the Blessing of God on a* pious Education, *and other means of Grace, and in answer to the fervent Prayers of her* holy Parents, *for the fulfilling of God's* Covenant Promise *to them and to their seed; we have great reason to believe that she had chosen the Favour of God as her Felicity and End, almost as soon as she was capable of making a deliberate choice.*

§. 4. *And a Life of* Seventeen years, *(whereof so great a part is lost by Infancy and Childhood) is certainly very short for the growth and ripening of such fruits of the Spirit as she discover'd.* A Time and Age, *when Vice and Vanity are wont to blossom and sprout forth in others. When the Thoughts of Death and Judgment are usually rejected as unwelcome Intruders before their Time; and serious preparation for it deferr'd to a reputed more Convenient Season.*

§. 5. *But before that Age,* her diligent and delightful reading of the Holy Scripture, and valuation of it above other Books, *was very admirable and exemplary. Making this Bread of Life her daily food, and tasting such sweetness, and reaping such benefit by it, that even* at midnight, *while others slept, she would often spend several hours in reading the Bible: Lamenting on her death-bed the Loss of Time by other Books; which could not assist her to a better understanding of her duty, and the mind of God, or take off her Affections from the Love of this World, and prepare her Soul for the Heavenly Glory.*

§. 6. *Not-*

§. 6. *Notwithstanding this secret serious Piety, her* Humility *and* Modesty *was such, as not to make a great noise and show to others, as if the Form of Godliness were the principal or only thing to be regarded.*

§. 7. *For several weeks* before her last Sickness, *she was observ'd less to regard the World than formerly; more Seriously to be devoted to God; and more to dislike vain Company, and idle Talk, especially if it carried with it a Tendency and design to disparage others: and in all respects so to demean her self, as if she had receiv'd some secret Revelation from God, that her Time would be but short, and her change was near.*

§. 8. *Though before she fell sick, she was fearfull enough of that* * Disease, *whereof she dyed, yet having taken her* Bed, *and knowing the Distemper, she profest her self intirely willing to acquiesce in the will of God. And was displeas'd with any who would have tamper'd with her Face, or discours'd to that purpose.*

*The small Pox.

§. 9. *Yea during the whole three weeks of her Sickness, she continued in such a frame; notwithstanding the loathsomeness of the Disease; notwithstanding the Troublesome Prescriptions of Physitians; notwithstanding her own* Pains, *of which, her Constitution,* Breeding *and Age considered, she could not but be very apprehensive. And with an* admirable Patience and resignation to the will of God, *with a great contempt of the Vanities of this World, and an holy Indifference even to Life it self, she* desired to Depart: *And that not meerly to be eas'd of her Pain, but* to be with

Christ, *and the blessed Society above: or to use her own words,* To be with her Heavenly and her Natural Father: *And gave this excellent reason for her desire; Least if restored to health, she should meet with some* prevailing Temptations, *that might turn away her Heart from God and Heaven: and therefore she had rather be with Christ than put it to the Venture.*

§. 10. *Her* Victory over this World *was likewise evident by the particular charge she gave to those about her, to let some* young Gentlewomen *of her Acquaintance know from her, how* Contemptible *the best of this World will be, when they come to dye: and entreat them in her Name, (as her last request, and the Expression of her special kindness to their Souls) that they would not overvalue it.*

§. 11. *As an instance of her* submission to the good pleasure of God, *and satisfaction in his order: she desired, that her* Mother, *and the whole Family might joyn with her in singing the latter part of the* 39 *Psalm:*

Ver. 9. I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because Lord thou didst it. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a Moth. Surely every man is Vanity. *Selah,* &c. *Which she repeated by heart according to the Metre.*

§. 12. *As an instance of her* joyful Hope of Glory *in the presence of Christ after death, she made those who attended in her Sickness, frequently to read over the* 1 Thess. 4. *cap. in the close whereof, the glorious Appearance of Christ to Judgment is set forth; and the* Hap-

Happineſs of the Saints deſcrib'd, by being ever with the Lord; *with this addition,* Wherefore comfort one another with theſe words. Ver. 17, 18

§. 13. *With the free* uſe of her Reaſon, *to the very laſt, God was pleas'd to give her the great Bleſſing of a* Tender Conſcience; *and therefore ſhe did not ſlightly overlook even* little Failings *without a penitent obſervation: and ſome of them ſuch as no man in a judgment of Charity would reckon ſinfull. Every thing that look'd like* undutifulneſs to her Mother, *ſhe heartily begg'd her Pardon for; though nothing conſiderable of that kind can be remembred to make her need forgiveneſs: thankfully owning the ſtrictneſs of her Education, the ſeaſonable Reproofs of a diſcreet Parent, and even the abridgement of that Liberty which other young perſons take, (very often to their prejudice and ruine) as a ſingular advantage and favour from Heaven.*

§. 14. *In ſome part of her Sickneſs, ſhe had ſome humble becoming* doubts and fears *of her own ſtate; but having imparted them to a Reverend Perſon well acquainted in the Family, and heard his Reſolutions and Anſwers; ſhe was better ſatisfied, and expreſt her hopes of Pardon and Salvation through the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt;* who loved her and waſhed her from her Sins in his own Blood. *Yea ſo far was ſhe from queſtioning the goodneſs of God, and the truth of his Promiſe; ſo far from doubting of the ſufficiency of Chriſts Mediation, the Merit of his Sacrifice, and his willingneſs to receive returning Sinners: that the believing thoughts of it were her greateſt ſupport and joy; ſaying often in the time of her Sickneſs, That* though her ſins were

Isa. 1. 18. as Scarlet, God could make them Snow: though red like Crimson, they should be as Wooll.

§. 15. *Moreover, she did* thankfully acknowledge the Mercies of God *to her in the former part of her Life: whereof she had very many, both Personal and Relative. And particularly desired, that Thanks might be returned to God for his singular goodness to her during her Sickness.*

§. 16. *She was* very desirous of Prayer to God *on her behalf; and very joyfull and well pleased when she had it: and being at any time ask't what particular request she desired should be made to God for her: she mention'd not her Recovery and the lengthening of her days; but the* forgiveness of Sin *through the Merit of her Redeemer; an humble submission to Gods disposal; and a prepared heart to acquiesce in his appointment. And so in one sence she was* full of dayes, *though she dyed very young: being satiated with the Time she had liv'd on Earth; and not importunate for a longer stay.*

§. 17. *Within a few hours before her dissolution, (of the approach whereof she was more apprehensive than those about her) she was very desirous that a* worthy Mr. S. F. Minister *whom she named, might immediately be sent for, to commend her Soul to God: Who accordingly came, though at Midnight. She her self joyn'd in that last Office with great seriousness and affection; and afterward return'd him her hearty thanks for his great kindness therein, saying,* Now I have nothing more to do, but to dye: *Only requested him not to leave the*

house

house that night, as knowing, that his Company *and* Counsel *might administer to the* support of her Affectionate Mother, *and other Relations, whom she should leave in sorrow, though she her self was passing to Eternal Joy.*

§. 18. *After which she composed her self to rest, and refused every thing that was offer'd her to take, making Signs with her hand, of her unwillingness to be disturbed.*

§. 19. *In that short space of her Continuance, which was not an hour, she was heard to say,* Be gone, Satan! Be gone! Thou art a Lyar from the Beginning, and the Father of Lyes. O come Lord Jesus. *And soon after she said,* He is Come, he is Come: *And so fell asleep, as in the Arms of her dearest Saviour, or as the Jews Report of* Moses, *That he dyed with the Kiss of God.*

O Death! where is now thy Sting? O Grave! where is now thy Victory? The sting of Death is Sin, and the strength of Sin is the Law: But thanks be to God, who hath given us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ: *And* Blessed are the Dead, that Thus dye in the Lord.

§. 20. *Would to God, that the Account here given, might effectually convince us, of the great difference between the Death of the Holy and the Unholy, of the Righteous and the Sinner: Might convince us, of the great* Blessing *of* holy Parents, *and a good Education; and encourage Parents to be diligent and faithful, to be serious, prudent and affectionate, in the Education of their*

their Children; because such a deportment is most likely to be owned by God with the desired Success.

And Convince us likewise of the Vanity of Youth, *the shortness of our Lives, the uncertainty of our Time, the nearness of our Change, the necessity, reasonableness and manifold advantages of* Remembring our Creator in our younger Years: *And withall might hasten our Preparations, and spirit our Desires to depart and be dissolv'd, whenever God shall call us.* That following their Example who by Faith and Patience are gone to inherit the Promises, *We may at length meet those Precious Souls above, who are gone before us; that with them, and all the Children of the Kingdom, we may* be for ever with the Lord, *which is Best of all.*

FINIS.